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ABSTRACT

Intended for students taking the Grade 12 Examination in English 33 in Alberta, Canada, this reading test (to be administered along with the questions booklet) contains short reading selections taken from fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama, including the following: an excerpt from "Catch-22" (Joseph Heller); "School Thief" (Dennis Potter); "In One Era and Out the Other" (Sam Levinson); "Those Winter Sundays" (Robert Hayden); an excerpt from "Red Dress" (Alice Munro); an excerpt from "Hide and Seek" (Lezley Havard); and "Manitoba Poem" (Dale Zieroth). (EL)

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READINGS BOOKLET

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GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

English 33

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

January 1985

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GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION
ENGLISH 33

PART B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

READINGS BOOKLET

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Part B of the English 33 Diploma Examination has 65 questions in the Questions Booklet and eight reading selections in the Readings Booklet.

CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AN ENGLISH 33 QUESTIONS BOOKLET AND AN ENGLISH 33 READINGS BOOKLET.

YOU WILL HAVE 2 HOURS TO COMPLETE THIS EXAMINATION.

You may **NOT** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

JANUARY 1985

I. Read the excerpt from *Catch-22* and answer questions 1 to 7 from your Questions Booklet.

from CATCH-22

"America," he said, "will lose the war. And Italy will win it."

"America is the strongest and most prosperous nation on earth," Nately informed him with lofty fervor and dignity. "And the American fighting man is second to none."

"Exactly," agreed the old man pleasantly, with a hint of taunting amusement. "Italy, on the other hand, is one of the least prosperous nations on earth. And the Italian fighting man is probably second to all. And that's exactly why my country is doing so well in this war while your country is doing so poorly."

Nately guffawed with surprise, then blushed apologetically for his impoliteness. "I'm sorry I laughed at you," he said sincerely, and he continued in a tone of respectful condescension. "But Italy was occupied by the Germans and is now being occupied by us. You don't call that doing very well, do you?"

"But of course I do," exclaimed the old man cheerfully. "The Germans are being driven out, and we are still here. In a few years you will be gone, too, and we will still be here. You see, Italy is really a very poor and weak country, and that's what makes us so strong. Italian soldiers are not dying any more. But American and German soldiers are. I call that doing extremely well. Yes, I am quite certain that Italy will survive this war and still be in existence long after your own country has been destroyed."

Nately could scarcely believe his ears. He had never heard such shocking blasphemies before, and he wondered with instinctive logic why G-men[1] did not appear to lock the traitorous old man up. "America is not going to be destroyed!" he shouted passionately.

"Never?" prodded the old man softly.

"Well . . . " Nately faltered.

The old man laughed indulgently, holding in check a deeper, more explosive delight. His goading remained gentle. "Rome was destroyed, Greece was destroyed, Persia was destroyed, Spain was destroyed. All great countries are destroyed. Why not yours? How much longer do you really think your own country will last? Forever? Keep in mind that the earth itself is destined to be destroyed by the sun in twenty-five million years or so."

Nately squirmed uncomfortably. "Well, forever is a long time, I guess."

"A million years?" persisted the jeering old man with keen, sadistic zest. "A half million? The frog is almost five hundred million years old. Could you really say with much certainty that America, with all its strength and prosperity, with its fighting man that is second to none, and with its standard of living that is the highest in the world, will last as long as . . . the frog?"

Nately wanted to smash his leering face. He looked about imploringly for help in defending his country's future against the obnoxious calumnies[2] of this sly and sinful assailant.

Joseph Heller

[1]G-men — federal agents
[2]calumnies — slander

II. Read *School Thief* and answer questions 8 to 14 from your Questions Booklet.

SCHOOL THIEF

MISS TILLINGS: Somebody in this room is a thief!

(*Silence*)

MISS TILLINGS: Somebody — some wicked, wicked child — has stolen our lovely daffodil.

CLASS: Aaah!

MISS TILLINGS: Yes, our lovely daffodil. The one we've all watered and tended since the middle of March. Sit absolutely *still* every single one of you. Quite, quite still! I have my own ways of finding nasty little sneak-thieves.

(*A long pause. Miss Tillings stares hard round the class. The children try to keep their composure, scared of any movement which might be interpreted as guilt. Suddenly Nigel can bear it no longer and his hands go up to his face.*)

MISS TILLINGS: Stand up Nigel Barton!

(*Nigel stands, head bowed in shame.*)

MISS TILLINGS: Well, Nigel! Do you know anything about this? I can't believe it was you!

(*At this last sentence, Nigel looks up, a faint hope glimmering.*)

NIGEL: No, Miss.

MISS TILLINGS: Then what do you know about it?

NIGEL: I think — I think I might have had the daffodil, Miss.

MISS TILLINGS: (*Sharp*) *Might* have had it? What do you mean, boy! Come on, speak up.

NIGEL: (*Twisting his head round*) I — I . . .

MISS TILLINGS: (*Menacingly*) Well?

NIGEL: The stem was all broke, Miss. Somebody — somebody — *gave* it to me, Miss.

MISS TILLINGS: *Who* gave it to you?

NIGEL: Um. I don't like to say, Miss . . .

MISS TILLINGS: You better had, Barton! And be quick about it!

NIGEL: Georgie Pringle, Miss.

CLASS: Aaaah!

(*Georgie jerks up in indignant astonishment.*)

PRINGLE: I never did!

MISS TILLINGS: Quiet Pringle! (*She advances on Nigel almost cooing.*) All right Nigel. Thank you. And where did Pringle give you this broken flower?

NIGEL: By the bus stop, Miss. The stem was all broken. I thought I'd try to mend it.

PRINGLE: It's a lie! A lie!

MISS TILLINGS: You'd better be quiet, Pringle! Does anybody else know anything about this? Did anyone see Pringle with the flower? Anyone see him come back into the school last night?

FIRST BOY: I saw him go back into the school, Miss.

PRINGLE: No, Miss no!

MISS TILLINGS: Quiet! Did you see him come out again?

FIRST BOY: (*Regretfully*) N-no.

(*The children sense blood and start to get nasty. There is an air of excitement. Eyes are gleaming.*)

MISS TILLINGS: *Somebody* must have seen him come out again. What about you, Bert. Or are you mixed up in it too?

BERT: (*Alarmed*) No, Miss. Not me, Miss.

MISS TILLINGS: Well? Was he with you? Did you see him come out?

(*Bert is nervous. He shoots glances at Georgie.*)

BERT: Y-yes, Miss. He wasn't with *me*, Miss. I did see him come out, I mean.

(*Class lets out a deep sigh of satisfaction.*)

MISS TILLINGS: (*Quickly*) And he had the daffodil in his hand, didn't he? Didn't he!

BERT: Yes, Miss.

PRINGLE: No, Bert! No!

BERT: In his left hand.

GIRL: I saw him too, Miss.

MISS TILLINGS: Where did you see him?

GIRL: (*Looking round for applause*) By the bread shop, Miss. And him had the daffodil, Miss. The stem was all broke, like Nigel says.

MISS TILLINGS: Come out to the front, Georgie Pringle!

PRINGLE: (*Tearful*) It ent true, none of it, Miss.

MISS TILLINGS: Come out to the front! (*Gently*) All right, Nigel, you can sit down now. Thank you for being so truthful.

NIGEL: (*Smirk*) Thank you, Miss.

Dennis Potter

III. Read the following materials about Robin's search for a tape deck and answer questions 15 to 26 from your Questions Booklet.

Robin is planning to purchase a cassette tape deck. In preparation for making her decision, Robin has collected the following materials:

M — a letter from a friend who is selling a used cassette deck
N — a copy of *Sounds Unlimited*, a stereo magazine
O — a copy of the Unfair Trade Practices Act
P — a rating scale from *Today's Consumer* magazine
Q — a copy of *Today's Consumer* magazine
R — an advertisement from Mike's Stereo Warehouse
S — a mail order advertisement from a magazine

M. Letter

Dear Robin,

Hi! How is it going? You wrote and asked if I plan to sell my cassette deck. It's a one-year-old Remwood. I was going to put it up for sale in a classified ad in our local paper. Your letter came just in time!

I'm trying to save enough money to buy myself a new Sanson. I've heard they're very good. You said you have $300.00 to spend. Well, my Remwood is yours for $250.00, and I'll throw in a few of those tapes that you really liked when you visited last summer.

Is it a deal? Hope so!
Kim

N. *Sounds Unlimited*

2.50
Sounds Unlimited
SPECIAL FEATURES
• Buying used cassette decks
• Explanation of technical terms in stereo equipment.
• Maintaining your sound system: Do it yourself!
• Sounds Unlimited's guide to the latest news in stereo technology
• And lots more!

O. The Unfair Trade Practices Act

The Unfair Trade Practices Act is a statement of the laws regulating transactions between businesses and consumers. It specifies the types of business practices that are considered to be unfair. It also sets out guidelines for determining if advertising claims are false, misleading, or deceptive. The Act gives information about what action a consumer may take to recover his or her losses from a company that misrepresents its services or products. Copies of the Unfair Trade Practices Act are available to all Albertans from Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

P. Rating Scale for mid-priced cassette decks from *Today's Consumer*

RATINGS

Mid-priced cassette decks

KEY: ● ◓ ○ ◓ ● Best ← → Worst

Listed in order of estimated overall quality. Differences of 5 points or less in overall quality score are not judged to be significant. Prices are approximate, and rounded to nearest dollar.

	Price	Overall quality score	Dynamic range: midband; Moby B	Dynamic range: treble; Moby B	Features and convenience	Disadvantages
Onawa D-700	$395	88	◓	◓	●	A,F,J
Technica CT-E5	450	80	●	○	◓	C,E,F,G
BMC DA-2E	380	79	○	◓	◓	C,D,F
Sanson X-500	340	79	◓	○	●	B,C,F,J
Remwood NK-42	300	73	◓	○	○	A,C,F,H,I,K

Key to Disadvantages

A – Tape counter does not indicate time remaining on tape.
B – No automatic reverse.
C – Does not adjust for type of tape.
D – No fast-forward/rewind feature.
E – No separate headphone level control.
F – Cannot be programmed to repeat a single selection.
G – Microphone jacks are located on rear of deck, judged inconvenient.
H – Has no headphone jack.
I – One-button record control may allow accidental erasures.
J – Cassette compartment has no light.
K – Requires more careful tape choice than most other decks.

Q. *Today's Consumer*

TODAY'S
CONSUMER
Featured in this issue:
• Mid-priced cassette decks
• Product Reports - getting the best deal for your dollar

Today's Consumer is a monthly magazine that helps shoppers make well-informed decisions about which product is best for them. Each issue evaluates three or four products. In addition to rating scales, the magazine has articles giving clear explanations of new developments in product technology. It also contains articles of general interest to consumers. The December issue carries an index to the previous year's articles.
Single copies $1.50. Yearly subscriptions $12.00.

Continued

R. Store
Advertisement

MIKE'S STEREO WAREHOUSE
ANNOUNCES A
SUPER STEREO SALE
ON Sanson X-500 Cassette Decks
Moby B Noise Reduction – Super Dynamic Range: Midband & Treble Moby B –
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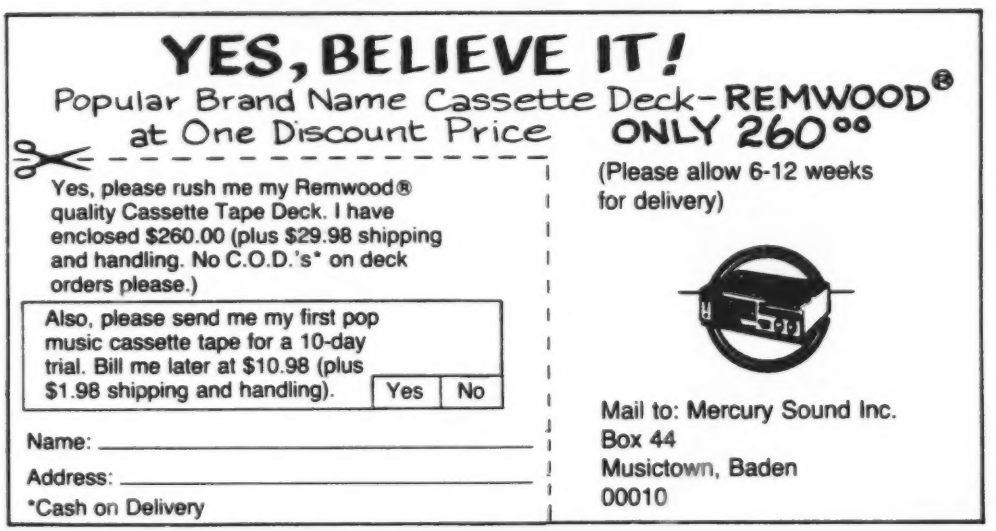
HI-TECH SPACE-AGE DESIGN
All of the advantages of high-priced cassette decks at this special LOW PRICE!
Regular Price $329.95
NOW FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY
$299.98

S. Mail Order
Advertisement


YES, BELIEVE IT!
Popular Brand Name Cassette Deck–REMWOOD®
at One Discount Price
ONLY 260.00
(Please allow 6-12 weeks for delivery)
Yes, please rush me my Remwood® quality Cassette Tape Deck. I have enclosed $260.00 (plus $29.98 shipping and handling. No C.O.D.'s* on deck orders please.)
Also, please send me my first pop music cassette tape for a 10-day trial. Bill me later at $10.98 (plus $1.98 shipping and handling).
Yes
No
Name:
Address:
*Cash on Delivery
Mail to: Mercury Sound Inc.
Box 44
Musictown, Baden
00010

IV. Read "In One Era and Out the Other" and answer questions 27 to 37 from your Questions Booklet.

IN ONE ERA AND OUT THE OTHER

My brothers and sisters and I were living witness to love and marriage at its best and its worst: devotion, sacrifice, adoration, sympathy, loyalty, tenderness, along with anger, alienation, and bitterness. A loving couple and a quarreling couple could be one and the same couple. The secret of an enduring marriage was no secret. Our parents quarreled. We saw nothing paradoxical about it. Married people exercised their marriages the way babies exercise their lungs, by yelling. They strengthened their matrimonial muscles by giving them a daily workout.

Psychiatrists do not look down upon the quarrel. Confrontation is also communication. The wide-open dialogue, the airing of the disparity between "is" and "ought," real and ideal, performance and aspiration, may have been (and may still be) my parents' version of today's encounter sessions.

They would rather fight than switch. Perhaps it was not even a fight. They cared enough for each other and for themselves to do battle with (rather than against) a worthy opponent. Perhaps they preferred discord over resolution. Perhaps they instinctively recognized that incompatibility was inherent in people and ideas, that dichotomy is really unity, that positives cannot live without negatives, and that opposites attract because they need each other. All of which, if true, led to the conclusion that if a man didn't have a wife, he would have to quarrel with total strangers, and for that they can take you away.

Sometimes she talked first: "I don't understand you. Monday you liked fried herring. Tuesday you liked fried herring, Wednesday you liked fried herring, now all of a sudden Thursday you don't like fried herring!"

"Herring! Herring! It's not the herring! It's the last twenty years!"

Sometimes he talked first: "You can always leave me!"

"I'm gonna leave you and make you happy?"

When words no longer sufficed to express the depth of their anger they flew into a great silence, during which the children were used as messengers.

"Tell your father it's time to eat."

"Papa, Mama says it's time to eat."

"Tell your mother I'm not talking."

"Mama, Papa says he's not talking."

"So tell him 'Thank you'!"

"Tell her she's welcome."

A dying quarrel sometimes had to be revived. You can't quarrel alone: "I don't like the way you're sitting there not saying nothing."

On cold winter evenings, when the homework was finished and there wasn't much to do, the children could kindle a warm argument and huddle around it.

"Pa, Grandma said she never wanted Mama to marry you."

"*She* didn't want *me* . . . ?" And they were off.

Continued

My Uncle M. and Aunt N. hardly ever argued because they hardly ever talked to each other under the best of conditions. They produced five talkative, exuberant children in silence. Yet they never thought of leaving each other, because "people will talk."

The day Aunt N. got sick my brother Joe told Uncle M. to deliver Aunt N. to Mount Sinai Hospital in an ambulance. "I'll be waiting there for you under the main-entrance canopy." The ambulance pulled up, Uncle M. got out, but there was no Aunt N.

"Where's Aunt N.?"

"We had an argument, and she took the subway."

Years later, at Uncle M.'s funeral, Aunt N. stood at the graveside as they lowered the coffin, crying out: "Wait a minute! Listen! I want to talk to you."

As usual he didn't answer.

It would seem that our constant exposure to the quarreling of the mamas and the papas might have turned us prematurely cynical. On the contrary, our early combat training taught us to bring our "as you like it" into focus with "like it is," not on the subject of marriage alone but on people partnerships in general. Even when we "played house" we didn't play like story-book princes and princesses but like real fighting people. "Look, you're only a prince. You can't be a king. You were king yesterday. I'm gonna be king. Okay, so get your own kingdom. You're banished anyhow."

We came to realize that every man and woman has something to say in his own defense; that there are not two sides to an argument, but dozens; that one of the reasons God said "Thou Shalt Not Kill" was that you might not yet have heard all sides of the story; that in human relations there is no perfect and final answer; that some ideas may never be happily wedded to others; that the dialogue, whispered or shouted, is eternal, and that the seeking of the answer is the answer.

Sam Levinson

V. Read "Those Winter Sundays" and answer questions 38 to 44 from your Questions Booklet.

THOSE WINTER SUNDAYS

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic[1] angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere[2] and lonely offices?

Robert Hayden

[1]chronic — constant
[2]austere — bleak

VI. Read the excerpt from "Red Dress" and answer questions 45 to 51 from your Questions Booklet.

from RED DRESS

The gymnasium smelled of pine and cedar. Red and green bells of fluted paper hung from the basketball hoops; the high, barred windows were hidden by green boughs. Everybody in the upper grades seemed to have come in couples. Some of the Grade Twelve and Thirteen girls had brought boyfriends who had already graduated, who were young businessmen around the town. These young men smoked in the gymnasium, nobody could stop them, they were free. The girls stood beside them, resting their hands casually on male sleeves, their faces bored, aloof, and beautiful. I longed to be like that. They behaved as if only they — the older ones — were really at the dance, as if the rest of us, whom they moved among and peered around, were, if not invisible, inanimate; when the first dance was announced — a Paul Jones[1] — they moved out languidly, smiling at each other as if they had been asked to take part in some half-forgotten childish game. Holding hands and shivering, crowding up together, Lonnie and I and the other Grade Nine girls followed.

I didn't dare look at the outer circle as it passed me, for fear I should see some unmannerly hurrying-up. When the music stopped I stayed where I was, and half raising my eyes I saw a boy named Mason Williams coming reluctantly towards me. Barely touching my waist and my fingers, he began to dance with me. My legs were hollow, my arm trembled from the shoulder, I could not have spoken. This Mason Williams was one of the heroes of the school; he played basketball and hockey and walked the halls with an air of royal sullenness and barbaric contempt. To have to dance with a nonentity like me was as offensive to him as having to memorize Shakespeare. I felt this as keenly as he did, and imagined that he was exchanging looks of dismay with his friends. He steered me, stumbling, to the edge of the floor. He took his hands from my waist and dropped my arm.

"See you," he said. He walked away.

It took me a minute or two to realize what had happened and that he was not coming back. I went and stood by the wall alone. The Physical Education teacher, dancing past energetically in the arms of a Grade Ten boy, gave me an inquisitive look.

[1]Paul Jones — a circular dance in which an inner circle of girls and an outer circle of boys move in opposite directions. When the music stops, the boy and the girl facing each other become dance partners.

She was the only teacher in the school who made use of the words social adjustment, and I was afraid that if she had seen, or if she found out, she might make some horribly public attempt to make Mason finish out the dance with me. I myself was not angry or surprised at Mason; I accepted his position, and mine, in the world of school and I saw that what he had done was the realistic thing to do. He was a Natural Hero, not a Student Council type of hero bound for success beyond the school; one of those would have danced with me courteously and patronizingly and left me feeling no better off. Still, I hoped not many people had seen. I hated people seeing. I began to bite the skin on my thumb.

When the music stopped I joined the surge of girls to the end of the gymnasium. Pretend it didn't happen, I said to myself. Pretend this is the beginning, now.

Alice Munro

VII. Read the excerpt from *Hide and Seek* and answer questions 52 to 58 from your Questions Booklet.

from HIDE AND SEEK

Jennifer Crawford: new owner of a country home
Richard Crawford: Jennifer's husband
John Bart: A neighbor

RICHARD (*Offstage*): Yes. What can I do for you?
VOICE: I'm John Bart. Can I talk to you for a minute?
JENNIFER: Oh, no.
RICHARD (*Offstage*): Bart . . . The farm by the creek, right? . . . Come on in. This is my wife Jennifer . . . Jennifer this is . . . (*John and Jennifer exchange a cold glare.*)
JENNIFER: We've met.
RICHARD (*Puzzled*): I was just going to make some coffee. Why don't you sit down.
JOHN: I didn't come to take a drink, Mr. Crawford, or to sit down. I didn't come to be neighborly.
RICHARD: What's your problem?
JOHN: Ask your wife, Crawford. She knows better than any of us. (*Richard turns to Jennifer.*)
JENNIFER: Mr. Bart. If you're talking about what happened this afternoon, I can't explain. All I know is that I was sitting here talking to your wife when you burst in, ordered her out and turned on me. I didn't know what you were upset about then and I don't know now.
JOHN: You must take me for a fool, Mrs. Crawford, if you think I'd swallow that. Just because we're country people doesn't make us stupid. . . . We may not be as sharp as you city people but we know how to look out for our own.
JENNIFER: Up to now I hadn't formed an opinion on your intelligence one way or the other.
RICHARD: Jennifer! What is this all about?
JOHN: Jill. It's about Jill.
RICHARD: Jill?
JOHN: My daughter.
JENNIFER: She's the little girl that's on our swing all the time.
JOHN: Are you going to pretend you don't know?
RICHARD (*Confused*): What?
JOHN: I suppose you've been talking to Jill too.
RICHARD: No. I haven't even seen the child. Now, look, John, if you don't want your daughter playing here . . .
JOHN (*Angrily*): My daughter doesn't play up here.
RICHARD: But you just . . .
JENNIFER: I don't know what all the fuss is about. Jill can't be more than seven years old.
JOHN (*Losing control*): What kind of a woman are you . . . (*John has moved towards Jennifer.*) I'm not going to let you do this. I won't let you hurt my family! I'll stop you! (*Richard takes John's arm.*)

RICHARD: Okay, back off. (*John struggles to release himself.*) We don't know what you're talking about.

JOHN: She's a lying witch! . . . She's never seen Jill! She couldn't. We lost Jill five years ago!!! (*There is a stunned silence. Richard releases his grip on John. . . .*)

JENNIFER: Mr. Bart, I don't know what to say. I'm sorry.

RICHARD (*Appalled*): Jennifer . . . whatever made you think the little girl on the swing was Jill?

JENNIFER: His wife . . . Elly, I described the child to her, she said it was Jill. She said she was looking for her.

RICHARD: She couldn't have.

JOHN: Mrs. Crawford's right. Elly did say she was looking for Jill.

RICHARD: You're not making sense.

JOHN: When I said we lost Jill . . . I meant just that. She went out to play and she didn't come home. We couldn't find her. My wife . . . the shock was too much for her. She won't accept that Jill's gone. Every morning she lays Jill's clothes out, sets a place at the table for her . . . in the afternoon she waits for her to come home. Sometimes, if I'm not there to stop her, Elly will go looking for Jill.

JENNIFER: Please, believe me, I had no idea about Jill.

RICHARD: Of course not. You see, John, it's all been a mistake.

JOHN: You're right about that. It's a big mistake to think you can put one over on John Bart.

RICHARD: Look, I can understand that you're upset, but my wife has explained . . .

JOHN: Not enough. (*Approaching Jennifer again*) You described Jill to Elly, you described exactly what she was wearing the day she disappeared. Explain that!

JENNIFER: I described the little girl on the swing!

RICHARD (*Intervening*): It's a coincidence. Obviously the child who plays in our yard looks like Jill. You must have a photograph of her.

JOHN (*Pause*): Yes, I . . . (*He looks at them suspiciously.*)

RICHARD: Well? (*John reaches into his jacket and takes out a worn wallet.*)

JOHN: This was taken on her sixth birthday. (*He takes out the photograph. He holds the photograph out to Jennifer. As she reaches for it the room is plunged into darkness. There is a general cry of dismay.*)

RICHARD: Oh, no. Not the power again.

JENNIFER: There's a couple of candles on the table. (*Richard moves carefully. John lights the candles.*)

JOHN: Can I do anything?

RICHARD: No, thanks. . . . Look, John. I don't think there's anything more we can say tonight. Please take our word that no harm was intended. When we see the little girl again we'll find out who she is, okay?

JOHN: I'll be surprised if that little girl comes back, Mr. Crawford. (*To Jennifer*) I'd like my photograph now.

JENNIFER: I thought you had it.

RICHARD: It must have fallen. (*With candles they search around.*)

JENNIFER: I can't see it.

RICHARD: It must be here somewhere.

Continued

JOHN: I have to go. Elly's alone. I'll stop by for it tomorrow.
JENNIFER: Fine.
RICHARD: Let me show you to the door.
JOHN: I'm not satisfied I've heard the truth here tonight.
JENNIFER: Well, I'm afraid that's your problem, Mr. Bart.
JOHN: We'll see about that, won't we. (*He exits quickly.*)

Lezley Havard

VIII. Read "Manitoba Poem" and answer questions 59 to 65 from your Questions Booklet.

MANITOBA POEM

In Manitoba, a farmer will prepare
for spring and contrary to popular notion
women are not foremost in men's
minds: the new warmth has made them
aware of trains and hills, of things
that would make them leave women completely:
something else keeps them. And the women
are just as glad for the rest.

Summer comes in from Saskatchewan on
a hot and rolling wind. Faces
burnt and forearms burnt, the men seed
their separate earths and listen to the CBC
for any new report of rain. Each day now
the sun is bigger and from the kitchen
window, it sets a mere hundred feet behind
the barn, where a rainbow once came down.

Four months later this is over, men
are finished. Children return
to school and catch colds in their
open jackets. Women prepare
for long nights under 6-inch goosedown
quilts. Outside, the trees shake off
their leaves as if angered by the new
colours. And without any more warning than
this, winter falls on the world,
taking no one by surprise. No one.

Dale Zieroth

CREDITS

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